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COMMERCIAL NEWS

Swiss Export Control.

By decree of June 18th the Federal Council authorised the Federal Department for Economic Affairs to subject a number of commodities to export licensing. By an order of the same day the Federal Department for Economic Affairs published a list of several hundred items that fall under the new regulation. Export applications have to be accompanied by a certificate of Swiss origin.

The reasons for this measure can be classified under three headings: The international situation prompts many exporting countries to make the supply of important raw materials or semi-finished products depend on the importing country undertaking that no re-export will take place. The dearth of various goods can make a limitation of their export desirable. Finally, in order to obtain important supplies Switzerland may have an advantage in controlling her important exports to the supplying countries.

Swiss import certificates, whereby exporting countries can make sure that no re-export will take place, remain in force. Thanks to the new regulation an effective control by the Swiss authorities will be much easier.

Export applications must be submitted to quota administration offices, who usually know the applicants and have great experience in handling goods and currency quotas. Generally speaking, applicants must be domiciled in Switzerland, be actually engaged in the trade concerned, and enjoy a good reputation. When approved by the quota administration offices, applications will be passed on to the Import and Export Section in Berne, which will operate for all items, except narcotics (Federal Office of Hygiene). Export permits will be valid for three months, and may be extended twice for another two months.

The certificate of Swiss origin will be established only when the commodity has been processed in Switzerland or has undergone a complete change. If such is not the case, 50% at least of the invoiced price must represent expenses incurred in Switzerland.

Any person interested in this new regulation and the list of goods may consult them at the Swiss Legation in London.

Preliminary Conference of the Settlement of the German External Debt.

By letters dated March 6th, 1951, the German Federal Chancellor and the Allied High Commissioners agreed on what follows:—

The Federal Republic admits its liability for the pre-war external debt of the German Reich. A plan for a settlement, taking account of the general situation of the Federal Republic and the post-war economic assistance by Allied countries, would have to be set up. On June 25th a Tripartite Commission (United Kingdom, France and the United States) convened a meeting of representatives of private British, French and American creditors of Germany with a view to obtaining a clearer view of the claims to be submitted to the German delegation. The first meeting with the Germans took place on July 5th, and it is planned to arrange for a general meeting of all foreign creditors

and of German debtors in London at the end of September.

In spite of the exiguity of its territory Switzerland ranks among the chief creditor countries. In view of the substantial interests of Switzerland, Holland, Belgium and Sweden, the Tripartite Commission have invited these countries to send observers to the preliminary conference. A member of the Swiss Legation and an official of the Federal Political Department have been appointed as such.

Austrian Foreign Loans.

After the first world war the League of Nations sponsored the floating of loans destined to rehabilitate the economy of Austria. The United Kingdom, France, Czechoslovakia, Italy and, to a lesser extent, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark and Holland guaranteed the loans. Since the end of the war Austria has been in default owing to the disruption of her economy. The guarantors have lived up to their obligations, but Italy is questioning now the alleged incapacity of Austria to honour part at least of her obligations. In order to ascertain the respective positions a session of the Committee of Control of the guarantor States for the Reconstruction of Austria was arranged for July 5th. Switzerland is not a guarantor State, but



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portions of the loans were issued in Switzerland. Our country was therefore represented by two observers.

Export of Swiss Strawberries.

In the Anglo-Swiss Trade Agreement a quota is foreseen for canned fruit amounting to £20,000. Owing to the fact that Switzerland has an exceptional good crop of strawberries, the competent Swiss authorities have asked the Board of Trade to establish a quota for strawberry compote. It has been agreed to increase the present quota for canned fruit by £70,000 and this compote will be classified for import purposes as canned strawberries in syrup.

Increased Chocolate Quota.

Since the establishing of the quota for chocolate confectionery it has shown that the amount of £50,000 is by far not sufficient to cover the demand in this country and the Board of Trade have agreed to increase the quota by £25,000 for chocolate and sugar confectionery.

Swiss Lighters for the United Kingdom.

The British authorities have further agreed to open a quota of £4,000 for the import of gold cigarette lighters from Switzerland. These lighters (9 carat gold) are manufactured by the Swiss firm La Nationale S.A. of Geneva and will be imported by the well known firm Dunhill Ltd.

Over-employment in Switzerland.

During the first trimester of this year 23,000 entry permits have been issued in Switzerland to

foreign workers. During the same period of last year only 14,300 of such permits were granted.

Some facts and figures about Swiss Railways.

According to the annual statistic published by the Swiss Federal Railways the total length of the railway net is 2,974 km., nearly all of which electrified. There are 3,110 bridges and 240 tunnels. Unfortunately, the level crossings — over 7,000 — are much too numerous. At the end of last year the Swiss Federal Railways possessed 596 electric and 284 steam engines, 2,613 passenger carriages and 20,766 goods tracks.

Swiss Cigarettes.

More than half a milliard of cigarettes were manufactured in April. 352.6 millions are sold at 90 cts., 80 millions at 70 cts., 78 millions at Fr.1.10 and 37 millions at Fr.1.30 the packet. The tax of this enormous quantity of cigarettes is for the benefit of the Old Age Insurance Scheme. The export of cigarettes, most of which is going to Italy, amounted during the month of April to three million Swiss francs.

OUR NEXT ISSUE.

Our next issue will be published on Friday, July 27th, 1951. We take the opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscription: O. Worth, J. Scheuermeier, E. Siegrist.

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